



2007

June 1,

Dear Randy Pace, City of Houston Historic Preservation Officer

The Historic Conservation Committee of the Old Sixth Ward Neighborhood Association recently met to discuss the proposed design guidelines for the Old Sixth Ward Protected Historic District on behalf of the neighborhood association and agreed on a set of recommendations that the committee requests to be included in the final version.

We sincerely applaud the efforts of the city of Houston and the Civic Design Associates to put together the design guidelines. We are very much dedicated to our mission that Old Sixth Ward become a protected historic district and the proposed design guidelines will be a valuable blueprint in maintaining the designation.

Members of the Historic Conservation Committee include a building designer, two expert house restorers, industrial designer, architectural historian, two attorneys, and other people who appreciate historic architecture.

The purpose of this letter is to acknowledge the Old Sixth Ward Neighborhood Association's official endorsement of the proposed design guidelines and list the recommendations that its Historic Conservation Committee requests to be considered for inclusion.

1. The image on the front page should be replaced with another historic photograph. While the picture was actually taken in front of a carriage house located at the rear of a Sixth Ward property, the cropping of the image makes it appear that it is a front-loading garage. The picture has been subject to misinterpretation that front-loading garages have historic precedent and therefore should be replaced with the picture titled "1804 N. Memorial\*A from the historic photo webpage of the Old Sixth Ward Website (<http://www.old6ward.org/pictures.htm>).
2. The guideline packet should have an acknowledgement page recognizing those who contributed to the design guidelines. Appropriate credit should be given to Mr. JD Bartell who prepared the original draft with contributions from Jane Cahill and Charles Stava.
3. On page 11, Section D – Restoration, please add:
  2. Relocation of compatible historic structures from outside the Old Sixth Ward Historic District to within the district is recommended in lieu of new construction.

Old Sixth Ward Neighborhood Association  
P.O. Box 1682  
Houston, Texas 77251

*"A neighborhood in the heart of Houston since the 1850's."*

4. On page 14, Section B – Building Lines, please add text in layman's terms that lot line to lot line construction shall not be considered, and that maximum building width should not exceed 80% of the lot width.
5. On page 15, Section C – Parking, please add:
  5. Front-loading garages located on the main façade on the front of the property shall not be considered.
6. On page 18, Section C – Landscaping Recommendations, please add:
  4. The use of concrete for pavements should be limited for driveway usage and not take up more than 50% of the width of the front yard.
  5. Preferred driveway material should be concrete or stone pavers, brick, and or gravel.
7. On page 20, Section B – General Standards for New Construction. In the Composition category, please remove text suggesting corner towers. There is no historic precedent for corner towers in the Old Sixth Ward and therefore should not be considered.
8. On page 21, Section B - General Standards for New Construction. In the Roof Forms category – Height, in paragraph a, please increase the building height to 27 feet from 22 feet at the top of the eave board. Since the average ceiling height in Old Sixth Ward's historic homes is 11 feet, for a two-story house with 11 ft ceilings atop a 3 ft pier and beam foundation, the minimum eave height is 26 ft. The overall maximum height may remain at 35 feet.
9. On page 23, Section D – Key Construction Details, please add:
  2. Cinder block foundations facing the street should be covered with brick veneer.
10. On page 25, Section D – Key Construction Details, category 3, Window and Doors, please add:
  - e. Front doors should have a transom window above it, and may be surrounded with sidelights in proportion to the structure's style of architecture.
11. On page 26, please remove all suggestion of stucco as exterior building material. There is no historic precedent for stucco as exterior building material in the Old Sixth Ward except in form of a lime wash over brick veneer.
12. On page 26, please add text that designs for trimwork should be based on existing historic examples throughout the neighborhood.
13. On page 27, Section E – Materials and Finishes, please remove all suggestion of stucco and EIFS as exterior building material. However plaster or lime wash may be applied on brick veneer.
14. On page 33, Section 4 – Cross Gable, please revise text to show that structures with a cross-gable floor plan often had a hipped roof, instead of rarely as outlined.
15. On page 37, Section 4 – Garage Apartment, please add to the text that one over one windows were also used.
16. On Page 38, Section 4 – I-Cottage, please add to the text that six over six windows were also used.
17. On Page 43, Section 4 – Three Bay, please add to the text that six over six windows were also used.

18. In Appendix A, Village in the City, – please revise the text to demonstrate that Mr. John Austin of the John Austin land grant was a close friend of Stephen F Austin. It was believed that John was a distant cousin of Stephen but there is no historic documentation to prove this.

The Historic Conservation Committee appreciates the opportunity to review the design guidelines and to make the suggested recommendations. We look forward to the inclusion of our recommendations to the final version and are very excited with the prospect that our beloved neighborhood will become protected for future generations to enjoy.

In closing, the committee suggests that the City of Houston's Historic Preservation office be expanded to include two more employees experienced in historic preservation. A minimum of four full-time employees will be necessary to properly staff the office and carry out its duties, which include enforcing the design guidelines for the Old Sixth Ward Protected Historic District. We are gravely concerned that the current number of staff at the Historic Preservation office will not have the time and resources to ensure that the guidelines are applied and all certificate of appropriateness infractions remedied in a timely manner.

Charles J. Stava  
Historic Conservation Officer  
Old Sixth Ward Neighborhood Association  
Historic Conservation Committee

**DuCroz, Diana - PD**

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**From:** nawilke@houston.rr.com  
**Sent:** Monday, June 11, 2007 9:01 AM  
**To:** neighborhoods.pd@cityofhouston.net  
**Subject:** Old Sixth Ward

Dear City of Houston -

My wife and I have reviewed the proposed design guidelines for the OSW. As the current owners of 2203 Kane (listed as a contributing structure, and featured twice), we are quite proud of our historical house, and look forward to protections for the neighborhood in which it sits.

We enthusiastically support the proposed guidelines and look forward to them being enacted.

Sincerely

Nathan and April Wilke

2203 Kane

6/13/2007

Barry W. Norman  
PO Box 498  
Houston, TX 77001  
June 13, 2007

Mayor White and City Council,

Re: Old Sixth Ward

As a property owner in the Old Sixth Ward I hereby tender my comments related to the proposed Design Guidelines and Protected Historic District.

First, I am opposed to the city's use of the citizens tax dollars to develop these "guidelines".

**Solution: Cease and desist in developing these "guidelines".**

Second, I believe the proposed changes to the Houston Historic Preservation Ordinance to designate the Sixth Ward a Protected Historic District, make these guidelines mandatory and eliminate the 90 day waiver is a violation of my constitutional property rights and I vehemently oppose the proposed amendments for the following reasons.

- a) The amendment strips owners of their right to make best use of their property.
- b) The Guidelines are in form and effect Deed Restrictions that are typical of a new development where potential owners are fully informed of such restrictions before they purchase property. (I was told in a TIRZ meeting that new Deed restrictions must be approved by 100% of a neighborhood to be enacted.)
- c) These restrictions will reduce the value of all properties within the 6<sup>th</sup> Ward, will stifle development, and will reduce the city's tax base.
- d) But most importantly, I believe it is fiscally irresponsible to divert any tax dollars from needed infrastructure improvements to subsidize a group of special interest citizens who claim to be "preservationists".
- e) Randy Pace has stated the effectiveness of the current Preservation Ordinance, and at the recent HAHC meeting it was noted that there has been a net increase in the number of contributing structures in the Sixth Ward over the last several years. (7 new structures versus 5 losses, or 140% effective).

**Solution: Keep the status quo and re-affirm the 90-day waiver.**

Third; and only as a contingency against the eventuality that the city ignores my first 2 points and forces the proposed amendments on our Sixth Ward, I have the following specific comments on the "guidelines".

- a) The image on the cover page is romantic, but this is the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and people drive cars, not horse drawn carriages. This concept is incompatible with modern life is an underlying problem with the guidelines, and is at odds with other city initiatives related to parking. (Does having cars lined up on both sides of the narrow streets and parked on sidewalk easements and yards add to the historic character of the neighborhood?)

**Solution: Cease and desist in developing these "guidelines", or at least adopt a more realistic vision of current and future needs.**

- b) The restriction on placement of structures and garage doors presents a personal hardship for my building plans. I have multiple vehicles, including a trailer and a 34' RV that I wish to park in a garage. The guidelines as written would make it impractical at best to provide the required turning radius to park these vehicles in a garage per the design guidelines.

**Solution: Revise the guidelines to allow for front loading garages. In accordance with city building codes.**

- c) The selection of a few architectural styles in the guidelines is limiting and not supportive of the diversity in the neighborhood or of the city at large.

**Solution: Retain the 90-day waiver, or at a minimum expand the "guidelines" to allow any other architectural style that can be demonstrated to be consistent with period construction.**

- d) If the "guidelines" are adopted as mandatory they take on a strong resemblance to Deed Restrictions. (In a 7/30/06 meeting with Council Member Garcia, Claude Anello stated that the guidelines being prepared at that time by the TIRZ were "not so much like Zoning, more like deed restrictions".)

**Solution: Scrap the Guidelines, re-affirm the 90 day waiver, rescind the moratorium on demolition, and re-affirm the authority of the Houston Neighborhood Protection Corps to enforce current regulations protecting us from unsuitable conditions.**

**Solution 2: (only in the event they are forced upon us), they should be expanded to include the additional "protections" common in Deed Restrictions, including structural maintenance, cosmetic building maintenance, yard maintenance, property use, etc.**

- e) If the "guidelines" are made mandatory, current property owners will be faced with additional restrictions in how they can develop and market their property. Since these owners purchased property without restrictions, they will face financial hardship due to reduced market for their property. There are at least 2 current examples where property sales contracts have fallen through as a result of the proposed restrictions.

**Solution: Retain the 90 day waiver, allow an opt-out from any new Protected Historic District regulations for current owners, and reimburse property owners for any reduction in their property value.**

Finally It is my understanding that the proposed amendment(s) will have significant financial implications that will affect the city budget and the collection and utilization of citywide taxes including the following elements;

- a) Tax abatements or other financial incentives for historic preservation. (who will make up the lost revenues?)
- b) Additional expense for expanded HAHC staff to administer the guidelines
- c) Cost of additional Neighborhood Protection Corps officers to enforce the restrictions (since there is no Homeowner's Association as typical for a Deed Restricted Community).
- d) Cost for implementing the infrastructure improvements promised by TIRZ 13.
- e) Cost of reimbursing current owners for loss of value resulting from new restrictions.

I assume we will have an additional opportunity to review the City's business plan to support the proposed amendment(s).

**Solution: Develop and publish a comprehensive financial plan for the impacts of the proposed amendment, and allow the city to vote on a required tax increase to fund the required elements.**

I am reminded of Mayor White's statement on Oct 3, 2006 in which he said; "I respect people who invest their money in Historic Preservation. I respect **less** those people who say other people should be mandated to spend their money on Historic Preservation."

Please take the Mayors words to heart, and do not mandate how residents of the 6<sup>th</sup> Ward must spend their money on Historic Preservation.

Sincerely,  
Barry W. Norman  
1816 Lubbock Street  
713 542-4760 (cell)

## DuCroz, Diana - PD

**From:** maria [m@isabeldesign.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, June 11, 2007 11:16 PM  
**To:** neighborhoods.pd@cityofhouston.net  
**Cc:** 'Gafrick, Marlene - PD'; Jill J - MYR; 'Mayor Bill White'; 'Addie Wiseman'; 'CC Ada Edwards'; 'CM Alvarado'; 'CM Clutterbuck'; 'CM Green'; 'CM Holm'; 'CM Johnson'; 'CM Khan'; 'CM Michael Berry'; 'CM Pam Holm'; 'CM Peter Brown'; 'CM Sue Lovell'; 'CM Toni Lawrence'; 'Marlene Gafrick'; 'Rhonda - CM Garcia'; Ann Herbage; 'barry'; 'Beth'; bob; 'Carol Gardner'; charles oliveri; Chris; David Garvis; elan ; gary; GARY NGUYEN; 'James and Margaret'; Jeffrey Earl Crews, Attorney at Law; JGaine654@aol.com; JJ; 'Juana and Arnoldo'; 'Justin'; laraina; leah; marty; Pat Kopplin; Paul Kubosh; 'susan & pat'; 'Victor'; zach and monique  
**Subject:** Old Sixth Ward  
**Attachments:** Comments Re. Proposed Chages.doc

Enclosed please find comments re. proposed guidelines.

<<...>>

# Maria Isabel

CONCEPTUALIZING

P.O. Box 498

Houston, Texas 77001

[m@isabeldesign.com](mailto:m@isabeldesign.com)

713.542.0721

June 11, 2007

To: Houston City Planning and Development  
Re: Old Sixth Ward  
Comments Regarding The Protected Historic District

The proposed changes to the Sixth Ward Historic District seem questionable and unreasonable on many levels. I believe this proposal is an unfair and unbalanced use of power by the government, due to lack of knowledge about the Sixth Ward, and not truly understanding the needs of our neighbors. In addition the effort to protect historic structures will not guarantee the goal of protecting the character of the neighborhood.

The "protection" effort will encourage one of the worst problems currently in our neighborhood, "demo by neglect". I'm referring to property owners boarding up parts of their homes, sometimes the entire house. With lack of periodical proper maintenance these buildings become dilapidated and derelict, a haven for misplaced people, illegal activity, mold, insects, mildew, and stench. The result is compromising the quality of life in our neighborhood, specially if you live across the street or next to: 1804 Decatur, 1805 Decatur, 1808 Decatur, 1810 Decatur, 1819 Decatur, 1907 Decatur, 2006 Decatur, 2200 Decatur, and 2304 Decatur. This is just one of our streets.

When my Husband Barry Norman and I purchased 1816 Lubbock we bought the property with a clear understanding of the existing restrictions. We have plans to build our dream home there, and our plans are in accordance to the existing restrictions and building codes. It is unfair to expect us to change our plans and force us to build the house of your design selection.

We are building a two story, three bedroom house with an attached garage, and a 10X10 exterior deck space on the third floor. Our structure will be built on a concrete slab type of foundation and will have a flat roof so the top of our deck will not be taller than my neighbor's house on the rear with the two stories on pier and beam and a high pitch roof, much like the examples on page 38.

It's interesting that one of our issues with these "design guidelines" or "building restrictions", is the garage design. Barry is a racecar driver and he has been very specific about the design of our garage. It will be his dream garage and the door is 16' wide, and it is 17' from the front property line. We have designed a stone tile driveway set on a sand bed with grass in between for good drainage. The garage door we designed is much like the one on the front page cover of your "Design Guideline" booklet. Even back in history citizens knew the importance of building storage garages for their buggies. We as most homeowners today prefer to have an attached garage, it is proven to be more energy efficient, safer and secure, and convenient. The suggested driveway on the side of the house on page 16 is a wasteful misuse of expensive square footage. This proposed design adds to the hard surface on the property and decreases green space for a much wanted garden.

Due to the existing landscape on the rear, east side, and west side of our property now we decided to place the footprint of our home towards the back of the property. This design places our courtyard and gardens on the front of the property, allowing our neighbor's windows on either side of our property to gaze at our green space and garden landscape, a common practice in urban development.



It is evident to me that Civic Design Associates did not spend very much time reviewing and surveying the existing elements of our community. They totally missed so many beautiful and unusual architectural styles, details, materials and elements that makeup our diverse Sixth Ward. They missed an opportunity to design a home for the potential modern homebuyer that would be interested in purchasing an empty lot, but not live in a faux Victorian house. Civic Design Associates also failed in explaining the bastardized addition in the rear of the "Raised Cottage" on page 40.

There are many beautiful historical renovations here in the Sixth Ward, and there are many other wonderful modern buildings, some empty lots, and lots of boarded up windows and or dilapidated and derelict properties in every street. That's the reality of our community.

My concern is that not only the property owners of the old neglected buildings will adhere to this proposed protection, and these deteriorating homes continue to compromise the character, integrity, and charm of our community, but these new laws and restrictions stand to discourage new potential homebuyers from considering our neighborhood as a choice. These proposed changes will stagnate the revitalization, growth and development of our community.

Something is wrong with this proposal when 30% of the property owners voted against it, and another 24% were either confused by it, or did not find it interesting or important enough to vote.

I am disappointed on the path of this process: The design of the town hall format and not being able to speak with my concerns; my question on the pink card was never answered; the promised "posting" web page was not created by P/D and we were not notified until I called and asked about it; the guidelines did not get posted on the web until the day of the HAHC meeting; the revisions to the guidelines did not get updated until I called Marlene in regards to the two different documents distributed and asked about the discrepancy.

As I told Randy Pace, Marlene Gafrick, and the HAHC I'm available to work on this project. I believe it requires more time to consider all the missing aspects and components to ensure a well integrated plan..

I will be happy to work as a volunteer as my schedule permits, for as long as it takes.

Respectfully,

Maria Isabel  
1518 Washington Ave, Unit H  
The Brand Soda Bottling Building  
713.542.0721

**DuCroz, Diana - PD**

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**From:** tricia m [tricia2m@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 07, 2007 12:08 PM  
**To:** neighborhoods.pd@cityofhouston.net  
**Subject:** OSW poll

Dear neighborhoods.pd@cityofhouston.net,

My next-door neighbors and I have lived at 1914 State Street since 1996 yet we were never mailed any information regarding the historic district poll. My husband and I also own other property within the proposed new district and no information was mailed to us referencing that property. We have spoken to other neighbors who did not receive this information. Our voice wasn't heard because our view wasn't solicited. This letter shall serve as Notice of such failure on the part of the City of Houston. Additionally, I would like to know on what number of responses on which the 70% support number is based.

Thank you,  
Tricia Minor  
1914 State Street  
1910 State Street  
Houston, TX 77007-8334

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## DuCroz, Diana - PD

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**From:** Justin Despot [jdespot@frontlineenergy.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 06, 2007 1:36 PM  
**To:** neighborhoods.pd@cityofhouston.net  
**Cc:** 'DuCroz, Diana - PD'; rsvp@adriangarcia.com; Derek.Spier@cityofhouston.net; james.moeller@cityofhouston.net; districti@cityofhouston.net; districtf@cityofhouston.net; marlen.gafrick@cityofhouston.net  
**Subject:** Old Sixth Ward- Six Ward Defense Action Committee

Dear City Representatives & Mayor:

I was a participant in the recent meeting among city representatives and Old Sixth Ward owner's. Prior to and subsequent to that meeting I have made several requests for information applicable to the legal grounds or legal /regulatory precedent in Harris County which would justify or authorize the city to prohibit building demolitions on the basis of historic preservation. This is certainly not within any TIRZ authority.

While it appears that city representative either don't know how to answer or refuse to answer this question, it is a simple and reasonable question. Many of neighbors and I are of the opinion that the city is intentionally dodging this question and is driving a special interest agenda forward without the landowner's desire or consent.

Why won't the city specify its authority or obtain landowners consent?

Why has the city taken upon itself such a special interest when there is clear opposition by landowners?

Unless or until a city representative clearly states the basis of authority on this matter and addresses the legal issue, the Sixth Ward Property Owners Association is gearing up for a long battle and will oppose by all legal means any special interest regulations imposed on the Old Sixth Ward by the city.

I would very much appreciate an answer.

Justin Despot

Today's Land Solution	
<b>Justin G. Despot</b> President	<b>Frontline Energy, Inc.</b> 1716 Lubbock Houston, TX 77007
	tel: (713) 228 - 3577, Ext 111
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